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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
10/534,260	05/10/2005	Naoki Sawada	XA-10354	4984
181	7590	03/15/2007	EXAMINER	
MILES & STOCKBRIDGE PC 1751 PINNACLE DRIVE SUITE 500 MCLEAN, VA 22102-3833			COKER, ROBERT A	
			ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
			3616	
SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD OF RESPONSE	MAIL DATE	DELIVERY MODE		
3 MONTHS	03/15/2007	PAPER		

**Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.**

If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire 6 MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.

<b>Office Action Summary</b>	<b>Application No.</b>	<b>Applicant(s)</b>	
	10/534,260	SAWADA ET AL.	
	<b>Examiner</b>	<b>Art Unit</b>	
	Robert A. Coker	3616	

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --  
**Period for Reply**

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

**Status**

- 1) Responsive to communication(s) filed on \_\_\_\_.
- 2a) This action is **FINAL**.                                    2b) This action is non-final.
- 3) Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

**Disposition of Claims**

- 4) Claim(s) 1-9 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) \_\_\_\_ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) Claim(s) 2-6,8 and 9 is/are allowed.
- 6) Claim(s) 1 and 7 is/are rejected.
- 7) Claim(s) \_\_\_\_ is/are objected to.
- 8) Claim(s) \_\_\_\_ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

**Application Papers**

- 9) The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) The drawing(s) filed on \_\_\_\_ is/are: a) accepted or b) objected to by the Examiner.  
 Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).  
 Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

**Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119**

- 12) Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).  
 a) All    b) Some \* c) None of:
  1. Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
  2. Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. \_\_\_\_.
  3. Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

\* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

**Attachment(s)**

- 1) Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
- 2) Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
- 3) Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO/SB/08)  
 Paper No(s)/Mail Date 11/04/2005
- 4) Interview Summary (PTO-413)  
 Paper No(s)/Mail Date. \_\_\_\_
- 5) Notice of Informal Patent Application
- 6) Other: \_\_\_\_

## DETAILED ACTION

### ***Claim Objections***

1. Claim 2 is objected to because of the following informalities:

Claim 2, line 24, "lower" should be -- upper--. Appropriate correction is required.

### ***Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102***

2. The following is a quotation of the appropriate paragraphs of 35 U.S.C. 102 that form the basis for the rejections under this section made in this Office action:

A person shall be entitled to a patent unless –

(b) the invention was patented or described in a printed publication in this or a foreign country or in public use or on sale in this country, more than one year prior to the date of application for patent in the United States.

3. Claims 1 and 7 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being unpatentable by Schoen et al., (U. S. 6,324,935).

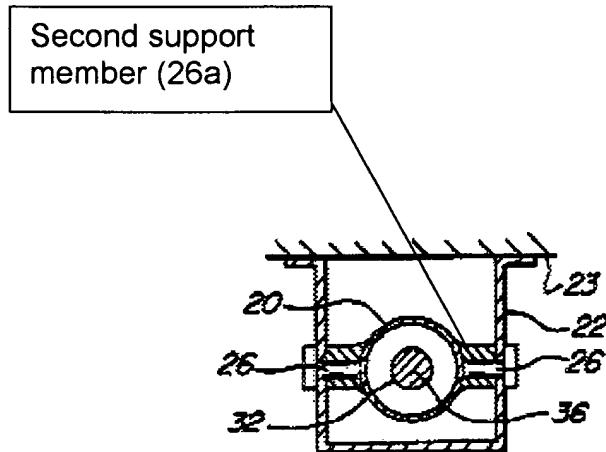


Figure A

With respect to claim 1, Schoen et al., discloses a steering apparatus for a vehicle, comprising: an upper bracket (12) fixed to a rear side portion of a vehicle body and including a pair of opposed flat plate portions formed with first holes opposed each other and separated from each other; a lower bracket (22) fixed to a front side portion of the vehicle body and including a pair of opposed flat plate portions formed with second holes opposed each other and separated from each other; a steering column (20) rotatably supporting a steering shaft (32); a first support member (16) held between said opposed flat plate portions of said upper bracket, formed with a first support hole opposing the first hole and supporting said steering column; a second support member (See Figure A) held between said opposed flat plate portions of said lower bracket, formed with a second support hole opposing the second hole and supporting said steering column; a first support mechanism (52) for supporting said steering column on said upper bracket via the first hole of said upper bracket and via the first support hole of said first support member; and a second support mechanism (26) for supporting said steering column on said lower bracket via the second hole of said lower bracket and via the second support hole of said second support member, an improvement characterized in that said steering column (20) is integrally formed with said first support member (16) and said second support member (See Figure A), said first support member is integrally formed with a first swelling portion having a pair of side portions that respectively press-abut on said pair of opposed flat plate portions of said upper bracket, and said second support member is integrally formed with a second swelling portion having a pair of side

portions that respectively press-abut on said pair of opposed flat plate portions of said lower bracket.

With respect to claim 7, Schoen et al., discloses a steering apparatus for a vehicle, comprising: a steering column (20) for rotatably supporting a steering shaft (32); and a vehicle-body-rear-sided bracket (12) and a vehicle-body-front-sided bracket (22), fixed to a vehicle-body-sided strengthening member (14, 23), for supporting said steering column, an improvement characterized in that said steering column is integrally formed with a plurality of swelling portions (26a, 44) and is supported on said vehicle-body-rear-sided bracket and/or said vehicle-body-front-sided bracket via said swelling portions.

***Allowable Subject Matter***

4. Claims 2-6, 8 and 9 are allowed.

***Conclusion***

5. The prior art made of record and not relied upon is considered pertinent to applicant's disclosure. Ikeda et al., (U. S. 6,467,807) and Yamamura (U. S. 7,134,692) discloses similar steering devices.

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Robert A. Coker whose telephone number is 571-272-8514. The examiner can normally be reached on 8:30-5:00 Monday thru Friday.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Paul Dickson can be reached on 571-272-6669. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free). If you would like assistance from a USPTO Customer Service Representative or access to the automated information system, call 800-786-9199 (IN USA OR CANADA) or 571-272-1000.

  
Robert A Coker  
Examiner  
Art Unit 3616

  
31/13/07  
PAUL N. DICKSON  
SUPERVISORY PATENT EXAMINER  
TECHNOLOGY CENTER 3600